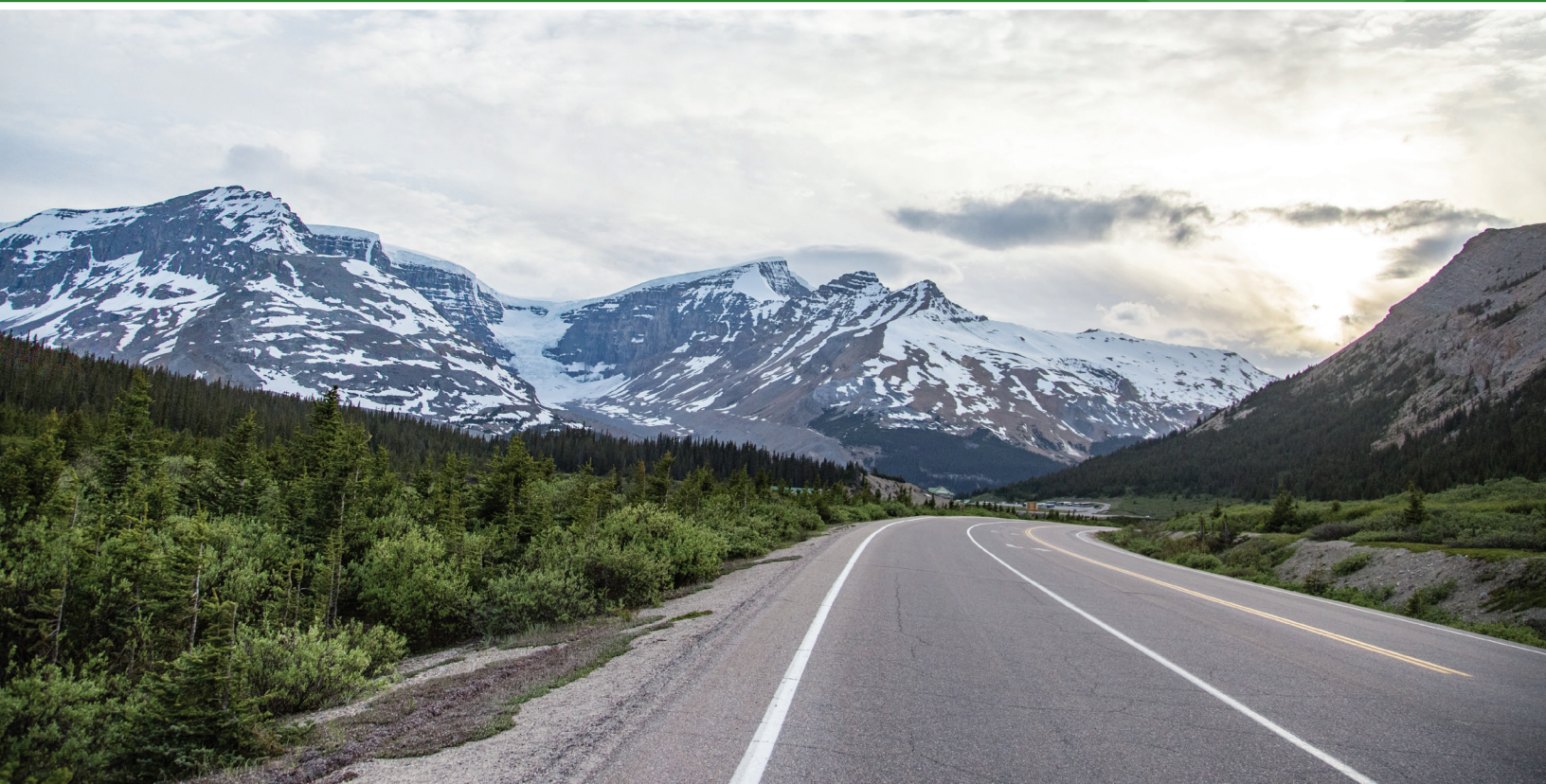




Jasper National Park

Annual Report

2016



Parks
Canada

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Canada

Canada



Reporting on Implementation

This annual report summarizes Parks Canada's accomplishments in Jasper National Park from October 2015 to September 2016. It complements an annual public forum that provides Canadians with an opportunity to provide their feedback on progress in the implementation of the *Jasper National Park 2010 Management Plan*. Annual reports from previous years can be found online at: <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/ab/jasper/plan.aspx>

For the reader's convenience, the report is organized by the headings in the management plan.



Whether by car, bike or foot, Jasper National Park provides an unforgettable opportunity to explore the Rocky Mountains.

Welcoming Visitors to Mountains of Opportunity

Federal Infrastructure Initiative

In April, the second year of Jasper National Park's five-year infrastructure renewal program got underway. The construction around the park this summer and fall was part of the largest investment in infrastructure in Parks Canada's history, with \$275 million for critical infrastructure, visitor facilities and operational facilities in the park. This year, the priority focused on projects to get the park ready for welcoming visitors to Jasper during the 150th anniversary of Confederation in 2017.

Edith Cavell Parking Lot and Access Road Renewal

Preparations began for the Summer 2017 relocation of the access road to the parking lot and Edith Cavell. This will help ensure visitor safety by moving it out of the high-risk flood zone and will create additional parking spaces to meet present and future needs. In addition, further enhancements in 2017 will be made to the Path of the Glacier Trail and the Cavell tarn viewpoint.

Further Improvements Completed or Underway in 2016:

- Much work was undertaken in 2016 to repair popular front-country easy trails for 2017 including a wider, paved trail at Lake Annette for easier accessibility, and a new dock for watersports activities.
- Trail 7, located along the Athabasca River, received much needed repairs to address deterioration caused by erosion, use and outdated trail design.
- The important roads to Marmot Basin and Pyramid Lake received temporary repairs that will keep the roads safe until further reconstruction work is done in 2017.
- Meanwhile, major work repairs were completed to Athabasca West and Miette River bridges, and to improve Snaring Bridge and Fiddle Bridge.

Rehabilitation of the 40 year old Cabin Lake Dam in 2016 ensures the dam will continue to provide a back-up water supply for Jasper's fire-fighting system to ensure the safety of residents and park visitors.



New Amphitheatre at Whistlers Campground

In late August, Parks Canada commenced construction of a new amphitheatre in Whistlers Campground to replace the original theatre that was built in 1969. Jasper National Park's interpretation team has been performing interactive programming at the Whistlers Campground amphitheatre for many years. Although well-loved and heavily used, the old amphitheatre provided limited storage space and indoor programming space, and was at the end of its expected life span. In the fall, the building was removed due to the poor condition of its foundation, and construction commenced on the new theatre, which will be nearly twice the size of the original one. The new amphitheatre will be fully operational for the 2017 camping season and ready for Canada's 150th anniversary celebrations.



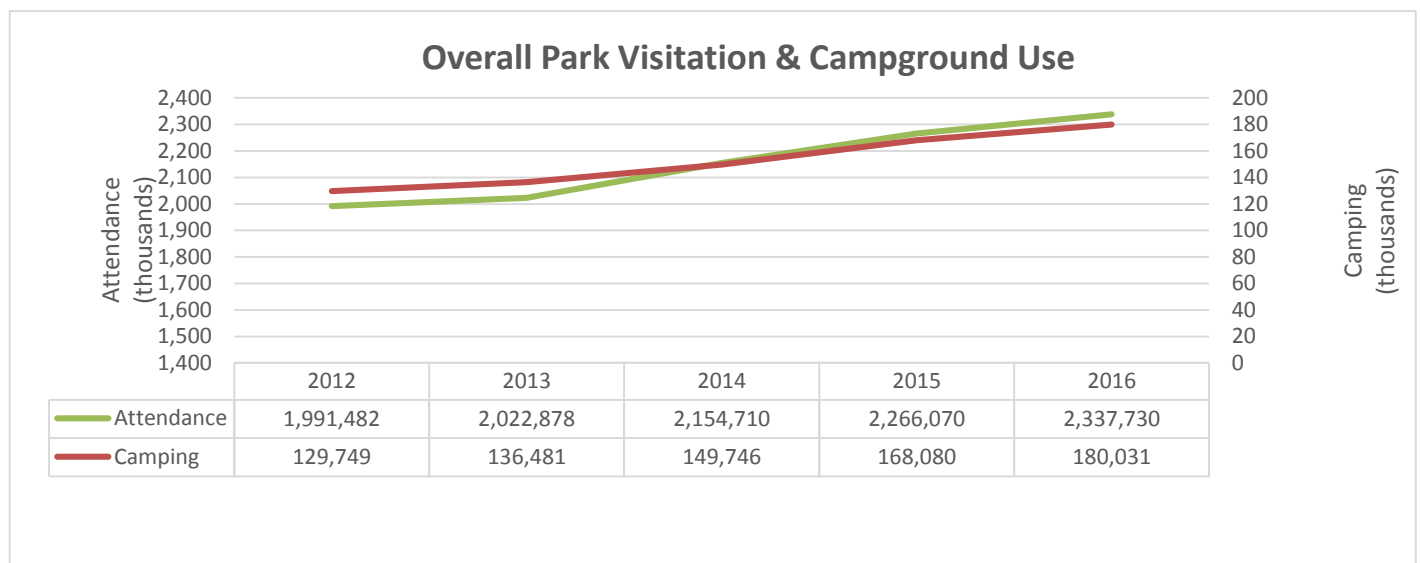
A side profile of the new amphitheatre Parks Canada is building at Whistlers Campground, ready for the 2017 camping season.

Valley of the Five Lakes Day Use Area

To improve visitor experience and safety at this popular destination in the park, the day use area now features upgraded trails and a new trailhead, new benches and a new dock at the Fifth Lake. An expanded parking lot now provides greater space for cars, including RVs and larger vehicles. Further planned upgrades include new log benches, picnic tables and a two-seater privy.

Attendance

Park attendance has increased again this year, continuing an upward trend for the seventh year in a row. In addition, camping increased by 20% over the past two years (2014-2016). Overall park visitation is expected to increase in 2017 as Canada celebrates the 150th anniversary of Confederation. The table below provides numbers for overall park visitation and number of camping permits.



Également offert en français.



Trails and Camping

The Jasper trail crew, with help from volunteers with the Jasper Trail Alliance, focused their efforts on trail upkeep and maintenance, including the replacement of stream crossing structures and general trail management throughout Jasper National Park's extensive network of almost 1,000 kilometres of trails. Priority areas to protect ecological integrity, improve visitor safety and ensure quality visitor experience include the Twenty-Mile Loop and the Overlander trail, as well as the Re-Run trail at Marmot Meadows.

Over the spring and summer months, Parks Canada evaluated the impact of winter weather on last year's trail work at Whistler's Summit Trail and further rehabilitation work was undertaken by volunteers this summer. Trails were delineated to deter visitors from trampling alpine vegetation, unofficial trails were rehabilitated and new directional signage was prepared for installation in Spring 2017. This project was a collaborative effort between the Friends of Jasper, the Jasper Skytram and Parks Canada.

To improve the frontcountry camping experience and to provide consistency with highway signage, new signs were installed at all self-registration campgrounds, including Snaring, Kerkeslin, Jonas, Honeymoon, Wilcox, Icefields tent and Pocahontas.

The addition of backcountry camping to the online Parks Canada Reservation System improved the ease and efficiency for visitors to secure a designated campsite in the backcountry, as shown by an increase in backcountry camping by 24% over 2015.

Experiential Activities and Programs

Parks Canada continued to offer a wide range of engaging and educational interpretive activities in the park over the year, including the diverse



On your mark, get set, go! The Jasper Canadian Rockies Half Marathon also hosted 5km, 10km and Family Fun runs. Credit: Multisports Canada

programming at Marmot Meadows Winter Hub; roving Wildlife Guardians to educate visitors about the many animals who call Jasper home; street theatre and Halloween Ghost Stories, featuring the history of the area.

From street theatre to guided walks, interpreters delivered many programs in support of the park's species at risk commitments. The "Sweet Nutcracker" street theatre raised awareness of whitebark pine with over 50 summertime performances at the Heritage Fire Hall. The Fire Hall was also home to a Species at Risk display. During the fall, Park



The Tonquin Valley offers expansive forests, a variety of wildlife, stunning alpine valleys and towering peaks.



interpreters piloted a new “Bat Walk” at Cottonwood Slough that includes all six of Jasper’s bat species with a special emphasis on the Little Brown Bat. Winter programming included a weekly “Winter Wildlife Adaptations” snowshoe activity that featured woodland caribou, and engaging with visitors on weekends at Maligne Lake about caribou conservation.

Other New Events

Parks Canada reviewed and approved several special event applications over the year including the inaugural Jasper Canadian Rockies Half Marathon, held April 16 with almost 700 participants; filming for The Amazing Race Canada in April; the second annual Gran Fondo in June; and the annual Jasper Heritage Rodeo on August 17-20.

Bringing Mountains to People Where They Live

Mountains 101

Parks Canada has partnered with the University of Alberta, a leader in education and research, to support Mountains 101, a 12-lesson Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) that will provide a comprehensive overview of mountain studies. Launching in January 2017, Mountains 101 will inspire Canadians to learn and explore Canada’s mountain heritage throughout the country and to understand how Parks Canada protects, conserves and shares these special places.

Canada’s Coolest School Trip

Jasper National Park welcomed grade 7 and 8 students from Toronto as the proud 2016 winners of Canada’s Coolest School Trip. This initiative is part of the My Parks Pass program, designed to encourage students to discover Canada’s natural treasures and to uncover its rich history. The students stayed at the Palisades Stewardship Education Centre and experienced an incredible variety of activities, including canoeing on Lake Edith, hiking Maligne Canyon, mountain biking, geocaching, cultural learning experiences, and discovering the breathtaking scenery along the Icefields Parkway.

The Marmot Learning Centre at its new location at Marmot Basin welcomed 1,200 students this year and looks forward to introducing Syrian refugee youths to the mountain park experience in 2017.

Numerous urban outreach events were held this year using the new “What’s The Connection?” mobile exhibit to reach audiences at the Telus World of Science in Vancouver and Edmonton and at the Calgary Zoo about the importance of caribou, whitebark pine and fire management.



Canada’s Coolest School Trip winners celebrate on top of the Rocky Mountains. Credit: Canadian Geographic.

Information contained here and in previous Annual Reports will help inform the 2018/2019 State of the Park Report, and the development of a new Jasper National Park Management Plan in 2020.



Celebrating History, Culture and the World Heritage Site

Archaeology in the Park

Archaeological work was undertaken over the year in support of the infrastructure investment program, including test sites along trails, at Whistlers Campground and Valley of the Five Lakes parking lot.

Snowpatch Archaeology

Archaeologists examined melting snowpatches that are used by caribou to find items that may have been dropped by caribou hunters. Based on a fruitful investigation in Summer 2015, which revealed an approximately 270 year old leather strap. Four locations were examined in August 2016; no items were recovered.



An approximately 270 year old leather strap was discovered in 2015 during snowpatch archaeological investigations, likely dropped by a caribou hunter. Credit: Todd Kristensen.

Ensuring Healthy Ecosystems

Draft Multi-species Action Plan

The draft *Multi-species Action Plan for Jasper National Park of Canada* describes the work that Parks Canada is doing as part of the larger national park conservation program to put vulnerable species on the path to recovery. Species at risk, their residences, and their habitat are protected by existing regulations and management regimes in national parks and national historic sites as well as by the *Species At Risk Act (SARA)*. This draft Action Plan describes additional measures that will contribute to improving the conservation status of the woodland caribou, Haller's Apple Moss, common nighthawk and olive-sided flycatcher, their habitat, and maintaining biodiversity.

Foothills Research Institute

Parks Canada is currently working with fRI Research to collect data on grizzly bear habitat use, movements, denning behaviour and health. Using Jasper National Park as a control area, we will examine the effect of landscape change outside of the park on collared bears. Parks

Canada will use the grizzly bear data for land use planning and to help manage human-wildlife conflict.

2017 will mark the final year of this three-year project. In addition to the 10 grizzly bears collared in 2015, and five in 2016, we will attempt to trap and collar another four in 2017. Our goal is to maintain 10 collars until Spring 2018 when all collars will be removed.

Although formal data analysis will not start until all the collars come off, we have already gained valuable insights into grizzly bear movements. For example, we have been able to see where bears that frequent human use areas in the spring spend the rest of their summer, and where they den. We have also learned that one collared female that was removed from a campground stayed away from humans for the rest of the summer. Collar data from the first year was also useful during the Maligne Valley Planning Process.



Mammal Occupancy Monitoring

Many large mammal species can be difficult and expensive to monitor using techniques such as DNA surveys or aerial surveys. Parks Canada partnered with university researchers to develop a method that uses remote cameras to monitor multiple large mammal species simultaneously, at large scales, in remote areas, and cost-effectively.

In Jasper National Park, one camera is placed in each accessible 10-by-10 kilometre grid square across the park. Parks Canada staff then download the images once per year. Together with Kootenay, Yoho, Waterton and Banff national parks, the camera images are analyzed to identify changes in the distribution of animals over time and to report to Canadians about these trends in the State of the Park Report.

This data is also used to estimate wolf density which helps us understand threats to caribou and Jasper's situation with respect to caribou recovery strategy requirements. For example, data from 2015-2016 show there are about 12 packs that include portions of Jasper National Park in their ranges. Pack size varies, from 2-12 animals, with an average of 4 to 5 wolves per pack. Larger packs tend to occur on Jasper's boundaries.

Woodland Caribou Conservation

The Mountain Parks caribou team continues to implement the *Recovery Strategy for Woodland Caribou, Southern Mountain Population, in Canada*, posted in 2014. This includes conducting assessments on new activities and projects, and existing operations to ensure that potential impacts to caribou or caribou habitat are eliminated or mitigated, and that activities are in-line with the Recovery Strategy. The team is examining options for caribou recovery, and continues to monitor predator/prey dynamics and ecological conditions in caribou habitat.

While some conditions for caribou survival and recovery are improving, with winter wolf access to caribou habitat reduced as a result of delayed access provisions and low wolf density, all herds remain relatively small. Monitoring of caribou populations in Jasper National Park suggests that caribou herd numbers are similar to last year. Through the results of DNA analyses and visual surveys, the Tonquin herd is estimated at 30-34 individuals, the Brazeau herd at 10-15 individuals, and the Maligne herd at 3 individuals.



Parks Canada will use the grizzly bear data for land use planning and to help manage human-wildlife conflict.



Two adult male moose are captured interacting in front of a remote camera installed at Whirlpool Valley.



Restoring Endangered Whitebark Pine

Over the course of 2016, Parks Canada continued to take action to restore whitebark pine in Jasper National Park. Six hundred seedlings from whitebark pine seeds collected in the park celebrated their 1st birthday in the nursery and will be ready for planting in Fall 2017. Parks Canada continued to cage whitebark pine cones from trees that appear to be resistant to white pine blister rust disease.



A curious onlooker inspects the caging of whitebark pine cones along the Astoria Trail.

These cages protect the seeds from predation, and allowed for the collection of over 40,000 seeds this past summer. 4000 of these seeds will be grown in nurseries in Fall 2017 for planting in 2018 and the remainder will be planted in the park in future years.

Fire and Vegetation Management

Mountain Pine Beetle Management Plan

Working in collaboration with the Government of Alberta, the Canadian Forest Service and the Municipality of Jasper, Parks Canada released the *Mountain Pine Beetle Management Plan* for Jasper National Park in August. Key goals of the

plan are to slow the spread of mountain pine beetle, maintain ecological integrity, ensure the safety of visitors and residents of Jasper, and educate visitors on mountain pine beetle occurrence and issues related to national park conservation. To achieve these goals, a multi-faceted approach is needed. This will include:

- Applying prescribed fire to achieve conservation goals, and using targeted single/multiple and patch tree removal where more efficient and effective.
- Working with the Municipality of Jasper to facilitate community protection through such programs as FireSmart.
- Engaging with visitors and residents of Jasper to communicate the story of mountain pine beetle and the efforts made by Parks Canada to maintain ecological integrity and ensure visitor and resident safety.

Fire Restoration

Further to the 111 hectare prescribed burn in the Jackladder Complex in 2015, Parks Canada carried out a second prescribed burn of 102 hectares in April with the objective to restore the open grasslands that were historically present in the area.



The April 17 2016 prescribed burn at Jackladder Complex, 14 kilometres north of Jasper along Highway 16.



Strengthening Relationships with Indigenous Peoples

Parks Canada continues to work closely with Indigenous communities with historic ties to Jasper National Park through the Jasper Indigenous Forum.

National Aboriginal Day

Hosted this year by Simpcw First Nation of British Columbia, the annual event held on June 18th featured a mini pow-wow as well as hand and stick games, and presented examples of Simpcw culture including a model pit house and traditional cooking demonstrations.

Jasper Indigenous Exhibit

Work is advancing on the exhibit's conceptual design that will honour Indigenous People's connections to the park in a centrally located space in Jasper on the lawn of the Jasper Park Information Centre.

Spirit Island Pipe Ceremony

On July 12th, 12 Indigenous community members including Elders from Bighorn Chiniki Stoney Nation, and staff from Parks Canada and Brewster Travel Canada, gathered at iconic Spirit Island at the south end of Maligne Lake for a powerful ceremony to honour and preserve the surrounding ecosystem and place offerings for the spirits of the Maligne Valley.

Jasper Indigenous Cultural Area

Progress was made on the restoration of the Jasper Indigenous Cultural Area, located on the Maligne River, with the removal of buildings and concrete ponds associated with the former fish hatchery headquarters located on the property. We are continuing final restoration of this site and working with our Indigenous partners to identify how this site will support reconnection and traditional practices in Jasper National Park.



The Indigenous Cultural Area provides a natural setting for Indigenous communities with historic ties to the park to learn, reconnect and share stories.

Fostering Open Management and Innovation

Parks Canada values the hard work of the many volunteers and organizations who support the Agency's conservation, visitor experience and outreach objectives.

- Almost 250 volunteers participated in 37 different initiatives this year, ranging from the Caribou Ambassadors Program to undertaking stewardship projects for just a few hours in a day.



Banff and Jasper volunteers undertake trail maintenance at Parker Ridge, Banff National Park.



The Caribou Ambassadors program expanded to 13 regular volunteers who contributed more than 50 hours of their time connecting with park visitors on the importance of caribou conservation.

- Parks Canada collaborated with local employers, including Mountain Park Lodge in Jasper and Pocahontas, Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge and Hostelling International to undertake volunteer-led initiatives.
- Several environmental-focused stakeholders contributed to stewardship activities in the park, including Junior Forest Wardens, Scouts Canada, CPAWS Northern Alberta and the University of Alberta Outdoor Club.
- The Jasper and Banff Field Units collaborated on the first joint volunteer project for both parks along the Icefield Parkway, building and placing trail wayfinding features on the popular Parker Ridge trail in Banff National Park. This outing relied on the hard work of volunteer coordinators and 13 volunteers from both Jasper and Banff National Parks.
- Jasper's 2016 Learn to Camp program hosted fifty new Canadians from a number of different countries including Syria, Iraq, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya and

Colombia this year again with the support from Edmonton Catholic Social Services.

- Elk Island National Park, Alberta Junior Forest Wardens, and Friends of Jasper National Park all played leading roles in helping make this program a success once again. Perhaps the most notable achievement of this year's program was the inclusion of a water-based activity, provided by the Athabasca Voyageur Brigade Society.
- Parks Canada continued to work with a variety of partners to support signature events such as the Dark Sky Festival in October, Jasper in January and Canada Day.



The August 2016 Learn to Camp Program provided participants with an incredible three days of camping, story-telling, hiking at Pyramid Island, and paddling Lake Edith in a voyageur canoe.

Managing Growth and Development

Community Development

The spring saw the completion of the new Library and Cultural Centre and the development of the Multi-purpose Open Space where the former Junior/ Senior High School was located.

There were eight housing starts, including two duplex units, and two homes completed this year. A nine unit apartment building is under construction with completion anticipated in Spring 2017. In addition, two existing homes

received solar panel installations this year.

Commercial Floor Area (CFA) also saw an increase within the commercial cap, with approximately 1,500 m² allocated to the Bear Hill Lodge Master Plan redevelopment and the Jasper Downtown Hostel expansion, with an additional 2,566 m² CFA requested for C1/C2 and Block S developments. With the projects proposed in Block S, the remaining CFA will be exhausted in this area.



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|--|-------------------------|------|
| Commercial Floor Area (CFA) Cap 2001 | 9,290 (m ²) | 100% |
| Developed CFA | 4,879 | 52% |
| CFA Not Developed, but Allocated | 4,062 | 44% |
| C1/C2/C3/C4 CFA available for Allocation | 349 | 4% |
| S Block CFA available for Allocation | 0 | 0% |

Jasper Library and Cultural Centre

The new Jasper Library and Culture Centre officially opened its doors on September 30. The centre plays an important and vibrant role in the community, home to the municipal council chambers, the library, Jasper’s chapter of the l’Association Canadienne Française de l’Alberta (ACFA), the Jasper Artist Guild (JAG) and Habitat for Arts and many cultural events and activities.

Environmental Stewardship Group

Jointly funded by the Town of Jasper and Parks Canada, the Environmental Stewardship Group had a busy year, with the installation of a public bike repair station located beside the public washrooms on Connaught Drive. The station is free to use and features various tools, a bike

stand and pump to help keep Jasper’s many cyclists rolling smoothly. The group also introduced a Fruit Tree Management Program to help residents harvest and share fruit from fruit trees in Jasper, and minimize this bear attractant.

Maligne Valley Action Plan

The Maligne Valley is an iconic area of Jasper National Park with outstanding scenery and signature visitor attractions that culminate at Maligne Lake. The Maligne Valley Action Plan focuses on renewing visitor infrastructure and facilities in the valley, maintaining or restoring ecological integrity, and supports the direction outlined in the Jasper National Park Management Plan. It is the result of an engagement process for members of the public, Indigenous Peoples, commercial operators and non-profit organizations interested in maintaining or restoring ecological integrity and providing Canadians with opportunities to discover and enjoy the valley.

We hope you have found this year’s Annual Report informative. It can also be found online at www.pc.gc.ca/jasper. For more information on anything you have read, please contact: Amber Stewart, Land Use Planner for Jasper National Park, at (780) 852-6147 or amber.stewart@pc.gc.ca.



The new Jasper Library and Cultural Centre provides a dynamic space for arts and culture in the community.